

9.—AUSTRALITE OBSERVED TO FALL AT COTTESLOE—A CORRECTION.

BY H. BOWLEY, F.A.C.I.

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In the Royal Society Journal, Vol. XXV., 1938-39, the late Dr. E. S. Simpson described an Australite which a Mr. F. Hanson stated he had seen to fall in Kathleen Street, North Cottesloe.

Following an enquiry from the Society of Research for Meteorites in America I wrote to Mr. Hanson asking for the time and date when he saw this Australite fall. A Mr. Hammer, a relation of the Hanson family, came in to the Laboratory in answer to this letter. He stated that the Australite shown to Dr. Simpson, and now in the Western Australian Museum, is one that he found in a ballast pit on the railway between Narrogin and Merredin in 1925, and not the one stated to have been seen to fall by Hanson in 1935. This Australite was found about three feet six inches below the surface while working the ballast pit; the Australite was covered in clay and had evidently been there a long time. The men working on the railway chipped the Australite by placing it on the rail near where it was found and trying to break it with a hammer, or pick. Hammer gave this Australite to the Hanson family.

The object seen to fall by Hanson is now lost; it was stated by Hammer that it was irregular in shape and about the size of a hand. Hanson told Hammer that it made a small pit in the tennis court where it fell; there was a flash of light and a smell, and the object was warm when dug up.

Subsequently Mr. J. C. Hood, through whose friendship with Mr. A. N. Carter, Hanson's employer, the Australite had first been brought to Dr. Simpson's notice, saw Mr. Carter who questioned Hanson very carefully again. Hanson admitted that the Australite given to Dr. Simpson and stated to be the one seen to fall, actually was the Australite given to the Hanson family by Hammer many years before. Hanson stated that he did not know that there were two Australites in his house at the time he was asked to bring in his find to show Dr. Simpson.

Until the object seen to fall at Cottesloe can be found, it is not known whether it is an Australite or not. The Australite at the W.A. Museum did not come from Cottesloe but from a spot between Narrogin and Merredin, the exact locality of which has not yet been ascertained.
